

American River Utilization Committee

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April 10, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Water Group Endorses American River Plan

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An organization of Bay Area water professional and civic leaders has declared its support for a multi-county agreement that would allow the East Bay Municipal Utility District to utilize its American River water rights.

The American River Utilization Committee, an unpaid, non-profit group chaired by former State Sen. John A. Nejedly of Walnut Creek, said a preliminary agreement approved by EBMUD, the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento, is a strong step toward providing delivery of high-quality water that EBMUD ratepayers have been paying for since 1970.

The group praised the EBMUD Board of Directors and staff for working toward a project that could end nearly 30 years of court conflict over the use of American River water.

Under a compromise agreement worked out by the three agencies, Sacramento regional groups would cooperate with EBMUD to provide the East Bay with adequate water supplies during dry years. In exchange, EBMUD would take its American River allotment from a point near Interstate 5 in Sacramento. The new diversion point would allow the water to flow through the environmentally sensitive American River Parkway from Nimbus Reservoir to Sacramento before EBMUD would move its allotment south into its Mokelumne River system.

The American River Utilization Committee, a group of former water managers, legislators, mayors, city council members and

civic leaders, meet regularly to consider water quality and water supply problems in the East Bay. The group long has opposed alternative proposals which would require EBMUD to take poor-quality water from the Sacramento River below its confluence with the American River.

Committee members had supported the original contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, which called for diversion of the American River to the East Bay from Nimbus Reservoir through the Folsom South Canal, but they regard the new proposal as a way to end years of court battles through negotiations with the City and County of Sacramento and other interested parties. The Nimbus diversion proposal remains on the table as a prime alternative if final agreement is not reached with the Sacramento agencies.

EBMUD's Mokelumne River water supplies, depleted by new state and federal requirements for increased releases from Pardee and Camanche dams, no longer are sufficient to meet minimum needs during dry years. With the American River supply, EBMUD could go through a three-year drought with minimal rationing.

at that acceptable level of rationing imposed on the East Bay environment & economy.

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